

❖ TOWN OF WESTMOUNT ❖



Inaugural Address of

FRED. W. EVANS, Esq.,

. . Mayor . .



WESTMOUNT, FEB. 3RD, 1896.

GENTLEMEN :

At this, the first regular meeting of the new Council for the year, I have thought might be well to briefly review our progress during 1895, and as it were take Stock of our Assets and Liabilities.

When the Town was incorporated in 1890 and the first loan contracted, the Council of that day, rightly I believe, adopted the principle of using its credit to assist the individual proprietors to provide themselves with Drainage, Roads, and the other accessories which go to make property valuable. The wisdom of this course is proved by the Valuation Roll, which has increased steadily from \$4,294,379 in 1890 to \$7,428,430 in 1895, and as additional proof that this augmentation is not fictitious, I would add that of \$1,500,000 increase in the last two years, nearly \$600,000 is represented by buildings, of which 132 have been erected in

1895 and 101 in 1894, and the population has increased from about 2,000 in 1890 to nearly 4,000 in 1895.

The debt of the Town is to-day \$700,000 of which there has been expended on Drains, \$355,000, Roads, Quarry, Yard and Plant \$197,000, Town Hall, Fire Station, Fire Alarm System, etc. \$31,000, and the balance in awards which are in process of repayment by the parties interested.

And here, I wish to say a word about criticism which has appeared from time to time as to the proportion which our debt bears to our valuation roll. If these critics would but remember that if we had adopted the usual plan of compelling cash payments by proprietors for Drainage and Roads our debt would be diminished by \$185,000 under the former account and \$132,000 under the latter, or a total of about \$317,000, leaving our actual debt under \$400,000, I think they would be compelled to admit that Westmount has not expended more than was justifiable in bringing itself up to

the requirements of modern civilization. I am glad to say that investors, who are perhaps the best, as they are the most impartial judges of the true financial condition of Municipalities seem to have faith in the soundness of our position, for whereas in 1891 when the first issue of 4 per cent bonds was made we could not get more than 95 for them, we were able last summer to sell the balance of our last loan at 101 $\frac{1}{4}$.

Now let us see what the owner of land worth, for example \$1,000, has to pay as his share of the debt incurred to make Westmount a good place to live in.

He will pay as a fixed charge for 40 years for every foot frontage for his drain, - - - -	9 1-5c
He will pay as a fixed charge for 14 years for the Road in front of his property, - - - -	12
Total, - - - - -	<u>21 1-5c</u>

Or on a frontage of 25 feet, - - - - \$5.30

He will pay for his share of the General Drainage of the Town, Intercepting Sewers, Tolls to Montreal, St. Cunegonde and St. Henri for passage of Sewage through the Sewers of these Cities -	\$1.10
(over)	<u>\$6.40</u>

	<i>Carried forward</i>	\$6.40
For Cross Sections of Roads, Quarry, Dep'n of		
Plant, etc.	- - - - -	0.88
For Town Hall, Fire station, Fire alarm, etc.	-	0.22
For interest and sinking fund on such portions of		
expropriations as have been levied over the		
Town,	- - - - -	0.29
Making a charge on Capital Account annually of		<u>\$7.79</u>

Now if a house, valued on the roll at \$4,000, is built on this lot, the taxes for the current expenses of the Town on the total valuation of \$5,000 will be at present as follows :

Police and Fire Department,	- - - - -	\$4.50
Administration,	- - - - -	5.40
Water,	- - - - -	3.20
Light,	- - - - -	5.90
Roads,	- - - - -	6.45
Health,	- - - - -	1.40
Parks,	- - - - -	3.15
A total of	- - - - -	<u>\$30.00</u>

We therefore find that the owner of this property assessed at \$5,000, the value of which on the ordinary basis of assessment would be from \$7,000 to \$7,500, will pay in all \$37.79 per annum, which he may at any time reduce to \$32.49 by repaying to the Town the balance of the loan it has

made him to build the drain and the road in front of his property.

The Council have endeavored as far as possible to expend on each section of the Town its fair proportion of the amounts raised on the credit of the whole for improvements, as will be shown by the following figures giving the relative areas and values of what is known as the High Level compared with the Low Level, and the amounts spent upon each—the line of division followed being Cote St. Antoine Road east to Mountain Avenue, and then up to the level of High Street to the City limits.

	HIGH LEVEL	LOW LEVEL
Area, - - - - -	18,994.110 ft.	18,020,371 ft.
Value of Land and Buildings, - - -	\$1,496,495=20 p.c.	\$5,931,935=80 p.c.
Drains payable by Frontage proprietors,	38,652=21 p.c.	147,029=79 p.c.
Proportion of cost of Drainage System payable by the Town charged to each Level - - - - -	34,240=20 p.c.	135,708=80 p.c.
Roads payable by Frontage proprietors,	26 615.42=22½ p.c.	92,254.41=77½ p.c.
Town's Share of Roads, Quarry, etc.,	18,394.27=22½ p.c.	63,093.32=77½ p.c.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that during the year just closed, it has been possible to secure for the use of the inhabitants of West-

mount as a Park about $15\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land, between Sherbrooke Street and Western Avenue known as the Smith, Watson and Murray properties, on a lease, with option of purchase, at any time within ten years for \$218,000. For the first five years the rental is equal to $1\frac{3}{4}\%$ on the value; for the second term of five years it is equal to 4% but I trust that the Council of the year 1900, when the second term will commence will feel justified by the increase in Valuation and Population to ask the Proprietors for power to issue Bonds for the amount of the purchase price, and complete the transaction. I may add that the greatest care has been taken in the preparation of the deeds to for ever maintain the ground as a Park (if purchased) and to prevent its alienation to any other uses whatever.

The purchase by McGill University of a large block of land on the Mountain Top for ultimate use as the site of an observatory has helped to draw attention to property in that vicinity, and

has largely increased values there. The Council thought it wise to secure 71,000 feet of ground on the brow of the Mountain and running back to the University reserve; this is also held on lease with right of purchase. Direct communication has been made with the Corporation Quarry by means of a road from the top of Mount Pleasant Avenue and this will also connect with a road encircling the University reserve. On the Quarry Road about \$4,600 has been spent, most of the stone used on the Town streets having been taken from there.

I cannot leave this brief review of the past year's work without recording my appreciation of the cheerful, intelligent and painstaking manner in which the officials in the employ of the Town have performed their duty, and of this, the condition of their several Departments to-day is the best evidence.

For the coming Year the programme is not an extensive one, and I do not think it will be neces-

sary to expend any considerable amount on Capital Account. No work of any magnitude is contemplated, but only such necessary road making and drainage as the opening up of hitherto undivided properties for building purposes may necessitate; as these will be of a local character, the burden will fall almost exclusively on the proprietors interested. It is not proposed to expend much upon the Parks, simply for the present to clear off the underbrush and make such paths through them as will render them accessible to our people.

In conclusion I can only express the hope that when at the end of my year of office I retire, and my successor presents his statement of this year's work, the record of steady progress may have been continued, and Westmount may have still further substantiated its claim to rank as one of the model towns of the Dominion.

FRED. W. EVANS,

MAYOR.

